1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

Introduction

121 IN September, 1948, I was appointed to undertake anthropological research in Sarawak under the auspices of the Colonial Social Science Research Council. The Secretary of the Colonial Social Science Research Council laid down as follows the nature of my research work: "a study of a traditionally based, stable, Iban community based on shifting dry rice cultivation and not subject to undue land shortage . . . . as described in 'A Report on the Possibilities of a Social Economic Survey of Sarawak,' by Dr. E. R. Leach".[1]

114 I arrived in Sarawak in January, 1949, and remained in the Colony until June, 1951. For most of this period I was working among the Iban of the Baleh region of the Kapit District of the Third Division. Our base camp was at Rumah Nyala in Sungai Sut, but field research was carried on in many other parts of the Baleh region—particularly in the headwaters of the Mujong. Visits were also made to Iban communities of the lower, middle and upper Rejang, the Katibas and Ngemah (in the Third Division), and of the Saribas and Ulu Batang Ai (in the Second Division). In studying agriculture many months were spent living on Iban farms, and this report is based on intensive first-hand observation; all of my investigations were carried on in the Iban language.

144 The Iban (or Sea Dayaks) belong to an ethnic stock which Haddon has called
141 Proto-Malay. In brief, they are a brachycephalic people (average C. I. 83) of
142 short stature (average height 5ft. 2½ins.), with black, lank hair and cinnamon
197 coloured skin. Iban culture is basically proto-Malayan in type. Howell, our greatest authority on the Iban language, had no hesitation in classing it as "a dialect of the wide spreading Malay language." However, it is a dialect which has become intermixed with words borrowed from the various Borneo tribes with which the Iban have come into contact. Again, the Iban language, although it does contain a number of words that are Sanskrit in origin, has not been influenced by Arabic as have the languages of the peninsular Malays and the Menangkabau of Sumatra.

161 In Sarawak to-day, the Iban are the predominant element in a highly hetero-
162 geneous population. The total population of Sarawak as disclosed by the census of 1947 was 546,385, and of this number 190,326 (or 34·8%) were Iban. The past century has been for the Iban an era of expansion and they are now scattered over most of the interior zone of Sarawak—from the Samarahan river in the First Division to the Limbang river in the Fifth Division, about four hundred miles away to the north-east. However, the main concentrations of Iban population are to be found in the Second and Third Divisions.

241 Formerly, all of the Iban of Sarawak were shifting cultivators growing their
177 *padi* on hillside clearings in the tropical rain-forest. To-day, there are a number of Iban communities (particularly in the lower reaches of the Lupar, Saribas and Rejang rivers) who derive their livelihood from the cultivation of wet *padi* in

[1] Leach, E. R., "Social Science Research in Sarawak," Colonial Research Studies No. 1, London, 1950.

1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

riverain and deltaic swamps into which they moved following the establishment of Brooke rule. Some of these down-river communities have been subjected to prolonged European contact which has profoundly modified their way of life. However, the majority of the Iban still live from fifty to a hundred miles from the coast in hilly country that is drained by fast-flowing rivers. Most of these hill tribes have been little influenced by the West and remain pagan and pre-literate. It is with these Iban of the hinterland that this report is chiefly concerned.

This report then, is primarily an account of Iban methods of shifting dry rice cultivation in pioneer areas. It is important to note that it deals—in particular—with conditions existing in the Baleh, and with the social behaviour and customs of the Ulu Ai Iban inhabiting this region. This means that proper safeguards must be observed before applying any of the findings of this report to other Iban areas. Nevertheless, the systems it describes are generally typical of most pioneer areas (i.e. areas where virgin jungle is still being felled and farmed), and probably of about fifty to sixty per cent of the Iban population of Sarawak.

Iban agriculture and Iban methods of land utilization can only be understood in relation to the various corporate groups that characterize Iban society. For this reason this report begins with a brief account of the principal features of Iban social organization. However, these introductory paragraphs are no more than the most summary of prolegomena to the sections dealing with agriculture and land usage that follow. A comprehensive analysis of Iban social structure is being prepared for publication.

Again, because of limitations of space, only passing reference has been made to the elaborate *padi* cult upon which Iban agriculture is based. Upon this fascinating and important subject I was able to collect a great mass of material and it is my intention to discuss it fully in a separate monograph, which will stand as a companion study to the present report. As Haddon truthfully observed: "It is characteristic of the Iban . . . . that the whole of their life is permeated with religious conceptions, and indeed no distinction can be drawn in their daily life between technical and religious operations: they are equally necessary." Certainly, it is only when the inter-dependence of economics, social organization and ritual is understood that there can be any genuine appreciation of the nature of Iban agricultural practice.

This report is concerned with a single aspect of Iban life: their system of agriculture. This was, of course, but one of the many topics studied during the period of my field work and in due course papers and monographs on many other facets of Iban society and culture will be prepared for publication.

I would like to express my appreciation of the many ways in which the Government of Sarawak facilitated my research work, and I am especially grateful to His Excellency, Sir Anthony Abell, K.C.M.G., for his action in approving an extension of my tour so that I might complete certain studies of Iban religion and pay brief visits to parts of the Second Division.

It is difficult to speak too highly of the hospitality and assistance given to both my wife and myself during our stay in Sarawak. In particular our gratitude is due to: Mr. and Mrs. R. Baughman (Methodist Mission, Kapit), Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Drake-Brockman (D.O., Kanowit), Mr. T. Harrisson, Mr. R. W. R. Miller (Director of Agriculture), Mr. and Mrs. W. Nias (N.O., Sibu and Betong), Mr. A. J. N. Richards, Mr. P. Ringkai, Mr. P. Smith (D.O., Kapit), Mr. I. A. N.

The Partition of Bilek property.

70. What then are the principles which govern the partition of the property and other rights which constitute a *bilek*? Of cardinal importance is the principle that siblings are parceners, or coheirs. This rule applies to all brothers and sisters who are resident members of the *bilek*. Equally important is the acknowledgement in Iban customary law (*adat*) that the *bilek* is, in general, a partible estate. Should a sibling and spouse, for example, elect to part company with the other members of a family, it is recognized that they have a lawful and undeniable claim to a proportionate share of the conglomeration of property and other rights which make up the inheritable possessions of the *bilek*. But there are certain exceptions of the greatest consequence, for two ritual objects, in particular, are strictly non-partible. Both are associated with the growing of *padi*.

71. In Iban eyes *padi* is by far the most precious thing which they possess; it is the main source from which wealth flows, and upon its successful cultivation all well-being depends. To the Iban however, the cultivation of *padi* is not so much a problem in agricultural method, as a problem in ritual knowledge and skill. *Padi* is a spirit, and a farmer's success depends pre-eminently on his ability to order his dealings with the *padi* spirits in such a way as to win their approval, and attract to himself the bountiful crops which all men desire. To this end, the Iban have, through the centuries, devised a series of most elaborate rites. All of these rites are focussed upon a strain of sacred rice, known as *padi pun*. Each year a tiny patch of this *padi pun* is sown in the centre of the farm, and here are performed the intricate sequence of magico-religious rituals upon which, it is believed, rests the fertility of all the padi that has been planted. At this stage however, we are concerned with the fact that every *bilek-family* has its own particular variety of *padi pun*. Unlike ordinary kinds of rice, *padi pun* is never sold or given away, for this would be to dissipate its magical efficacy, acquired during the countless rituals carried out by past generations. In addition to its *padi pun*, a *bilek-family* also possesses three or four subsidary strains of sacred *padi*. These are termed *sangking*, and each year they are sown in small plots immediately around the *padi pun* itself. Although all rituals are focussed primarily on the *padi pun*, the several *sangking* also fall within their ambit. It is rather as if the *padi pun* were the eldest of a band of brothers. Every different *padi pun* has a personal name peculiar to itself, and the same applies to all the different kinds of *sangking*. For example, Kubu's *bilek*, of Rumah Nyala, possessed a *padi pun* called Letop, and four *sangking* named Bauk, Segendang, Pinang and Mawang. It is one of the axioms of Iban *adat* that the *padi pun* of a *bilek* is non-partible. What then is the solution when a family subdivides into two separate households? Briefly, it is this: the senior section retains possession of the *padi pun*, while the junior and emergent section is presented with one of the *sangking*, which is then elevated to become its *padi pun*. This is clearly a matter of crucial importance in the study of the process of *bilek-family* formation in Iban society. The senior section of a family is always definable by the fact that its *padi pun* was inherited as *padi pun* from the previous generation; while the *padi pun* of a junior section was inherited as *sangking*. By studying the inheritance of *padi pun* and *sangking* therefore, it is always possible to establish the main line of a family, and the various offshoots from it, which have been brought about by partition.

72. A second non-partible object is the *batu pemanggol*—a ritual whetstone, which is the centrepiece of the rites that initiate the yearly farming cycle, and the most important charm which a family owns. A few Iban families still possess whetstones upon which human victims—captives taken in war—were once sacrificed. Such stones are called *batu jaum*, and are immeasureably valuable in Iban estimation. To divide a *batu pemanggol* would be to destroy it, and so, when partition takes place, it is always retained by the senior section of the *bilek*. The junior section, seeking an auspicious occasion, gathers a suitable looking stone from the riverbed. With a great show of solemnity, the new stone is touched on the old, and then consecrated; tutelary spirits are invoked and offerings made, and finally a pig (or cock) is sacrificed upon its surface. When partition occurs then, the senior section of the family always retains the ancestral *padi pun* and *batu pemanggol*. It may also happen that a *bilek* possesses some other unique magical or ritual object, and if this is the case, this too is retained by the senior section. Again, it is the senior section which continues to occupy the family's old apartment, while the junior section sets about constructing a new apartment, joined to one end or other of the longhouse.

73. With these few exceptions all the other property of the *bilek* is partible, and its apportionment is in accord with the relative size and composition of the two sections resulting from the partition. Thus, if each section contains one married sibling—the property is divided as equally as possible between them. On the other hand, if the senior section contains two siblings, and the junior section only one, the apportionment is then in the proportion of two to one, and so on. The share allotted to affines depends on the period of time for which they have been members, and during which they have contributed to the prosperity of the *bilek*. Cases do occur in which long-standing affines are granted exactly the same share as natal members. Plantations of rubber and fruit trees are also usually divided, though it is sometimes agreed that both sections should continue to have equal access to the crop of fruit trees. Similarly, both sections have the right to farm land acquired by the family (by the felling of virgin jungle) prior to partition having taken place. That is, there is a joint sharing of rights but no actual partition of the land itself. Land cleared by their section subsequent to partition however, is independently owned. This situation will be discussed in detail when we come to the subject of land tenure and usage.

74. More often than not the apportionment of property is carried out by the members of the two families themselves in private conference. But cases do occasionally happen in which feelings run so high that agreement cannot be reached, and in this event, the *tuai rumah* and

621 141. A *tangga*, such as this, is the only object which can be properly regarded as belonging to the long-house as a whole. This was a topic which I frequently discussed with the Iban, asking them if there was any other kind of property which could be regarded as belonging to the long-house as a whole, and which had resulted from the co-operation of all its members. Always the answer was the same: only the main *tangga* fell into this category, and my own observations brought me to the same conclusion. After a *tangga* has been erected, its upkeep becomes a general duty, but within a few years, the rites which accompanied its erection fade in the memory, and responsibilities are neglected or evaded. At Rumah Nyala, the main *tangga* provided me with an excellent opportunity to observe Iban responses to corporate obligations. On several occasions it fell into serious disrepair. The usual trouble was the collapse of the side railings, making the slippery, notched log that remained, dangerous for young children. A few days after this had happened, Nyala, the *tuai rumah*, would parade up and down the long-house, announcing the damage obvious to all, and striving to round up a group of helpers. But his exhortations never met with any sort of general response; sometimes one or two unoccupied men would offer their assistance, but more often things would drag on for several days, until Nyala himself would gather the necessary *rotan* lashings, and make good the damage with his own hands.

Co-operation in Economic Affairs.

621 142. The Iban economic system is based on the cultivation of hill *padi*, but here again, there is never co-operation involving the whole community. Each *bilek-family* is self-sufficient economically, managing its own farm as an independent unit. Between small groups of *bilek-families*—especially in felling, dibbling, sowing and weeding—co-operation is customary, but rules of exact reciprocity are very strictly adhered to by all participants. It is, in fact, a system of labour exchange. There is only one phase of the agricultural cycle that is likely to concern the whole long-house: the firing of the farms. If farms adjoin one another, no one of them may be fired until a general conference (*baum*) has been held. This is to avert the danger of fire spreading without warning, and possibly leading to loss of life, or serious ritual offences like the burning of another family's *batu umai* (*whet-stone*). With this one exception, farms are freely managed as individual family ventures.

621 143. Hunting and fishing rights, which are very loosely defined, extend over the whole of the long-house territory, and occasional excursions into the territories of neighbouring communities are not objected to under Iban custom. In small long-houses, large animals, such as deer and pigs, are usually shared among all *bilek-families*, but here again, the principle is one of reciprocity, and all catches are expected to be shared out in the same way. In larger long-houses, the reciprocal groups is usually limited to about half-a-dozen neighbouring *bileks* of closely related kin. Brief mention may also be made of *tuba* fishing, which involves the co-operation of a large number of *bilek-families*. The method followed is to construct a dam (*impang*) across a slow flowing part of a river—a task in which all the men join: then all those participating—men, women and children—foregather at a chosen spot a mile or two upstream, each *bilek-family* bringing a bundle of *tuba* (Derris alleptica) roots. After the necessary rituals have been performed, the roots are pounded up, and their poisonous juices gathered in canoes which have been half filled with water. This done, the milky fluid that results is all at once emptied into the river, and after an interval of about ten minutes, the whole party paddles off helter-skelter to net and spear the stunned and poisoned fish. Sometimes the whole community will join in the fishing, but participation is in no sense obligatory, and on most occasions it is usual to find persons from neighbouring long-houses also present. Moreover, although all *bilek-families* co-operate in providing the large quantity of *tuba* roots that is needed, there is, once the actual fishing begins, completely open and untrammelled competition. During *tuba* fishing, say the Iban, kinship ties are forgotten. Each *bilek*-family retains the fish which its members succeed in taking, and there is absolutely no attempt to divide up the total catch in equal proportions.

476 224 226 [278]

621 144. We may say then, that with the not very important exception of the *tangga*, the Iban long-house community holds no property in common ownership, nor is there any collective ownership of land. Again, in the economic sphere there is an absence of any kind of productive activity by the long-house as a whole.

423

The Position of Tuai Rumah.

621 145. In every Iban long-house there are two offices of great importance—one secular and the other ritual. They are the positions of *tuai rumah* and *tuai burong*. In most long-houses they are held by different individuals, but it is perfectly permissible for one man to hold both offices, and in some communities this does happen. Neither position is ever held by a woman. (c.f. Footnote No. 22). When used as an adjective, the word *tuai* means old, or mature, but as a noun it refers to any senior and influential member of a community. Here, the emphasis is not primarily on age, but on the personal qualities of the individual concerned. Thus, a party of young men setting off on an expedition (*bejalai*), to gather jungle produce, always has its leader, or *tuai*, though he may be no more than in his early twenties. And in long-house communities, able, though only middle-aged men often come to exert very considerable authority and influence. In all contemporary long-houses however, there is one man who holds the title of *tuai rumah*, or house headman.

622 [563] [671]

146. Since the pacification of the Iban and the establishment of European government, the position of *tuai rumah* has undergone several important changes. To-day, a *tuai rumah* is looked upon as an intermediary between his long-house and the administrative system. The Government accepts him as the representative of his community, and often he is made responsible for the implementing of its policies. Again, he has been empowered to settle disputes within the jurisdiction of his own long-house. (In the Third Division, "a *tuai rumah* may investigate but shall not try any case the maximum penalty for which exceeds six *mungkuls* under penalty of a fine of one pikul all to Government").(31) This means that the ultimate sanction of a *tuai rumah's*

(31) "Sea Dayak (Iban) Fines, Third Division," Kuching, 1940.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6
Rumah Bujak

a surplus which they sell to the bazaar. The padi is planted in July and August and harvested in February and March. They grow vegetables and fruit around the house and along the bunds between the padi fields, partly for their own consumption and partly to sell in the bazaar. They rear pigs and poultry and own five head of cattle comprising one bull and four cows.

When not employed in padi cultivation and jobs about the longhouse the people spend a large portion of each year at Sungai Pinggai tapping rubber. While so employed they live in their rubber gardens for days or weeks at a time.

Social Pattern

The situation at Rumah Bujak, where the people live part of the year in the longhouse and part of the year in *langkaus* a considerable distance from the longhouse, travelling between the two places as required is the rule rather than the exception in the Second Division. For example many Sea Dayaks in the Saribas and Rimbas Rivers have their longhouses upriver and swamp padi fields downriver, travelling between the two as required.

In short the Sea Dayak in the Second Division at least is semi-nomadic. This factor would assume great importance if medical surveys or the attack on specific diseases by mass drug administration were being planned, where it is necessary to have as near one hundred per cent of the population as possible in the longhouse at the same time. If a wide area were being covered by such a campaign, no particular season of the year would be ideal for all parts of the area in which the campaigning was being carried out.

The Sea Dayak is understandably reluctant to curtail his movements to and fro, as they have usually an agricultural motive and on agriculture his main source of livelihood depends. The only answer to this problem would be intensive propaganda before a medical campaign enlisting the enthusiastic help of the administrative authorities.

This problem of continuous migration kept cropping up throughout the present study. It made investigations more laborious and time-consuming than they would otherwise have been.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6
Rumah Bujak

During the occupation the Japanese cut a channel through the narrow waist of a *tanjong* downriver from Simanggang. As a consequence water was diverted from a large loop of the river which dried out leaving an area of very fertile padi land. The people of Rumah Bujak settled on this land in 1943.

After the occupation disputes arose regarding right of tenure of land on which the people of Rumah Bujak had settled. Several legal actions arose, as a result of which the people of Rumah Bujak were allowed to remain where they were. They also retain the rubber gardens at the site of their old house at Sungai Pinggai.

The present house was built in 1946. Several *langkaus* (temporary dwellings) were built alongside the house in 1955.

The original house built at Pruan contained 19 doors. Since its completion 11 *langkaus* have been built at the ends of the original longhouse.

The population of the longhouse was 169 at the start of the investigation. During the period of investigation there were five births and one death. The death was that of a monster shortly after birth, following a pregnancy complicated by hydramnios.

The house is built on low-lying tidal swamp. On two or three days each month the ground under and about the house is flooded at high tide. The rooms are small, dark and hot. Some are kept moderately clean but some are very dirty. The majority of rooms have separate kitchens.

Animals and poultry are reared under the house. The ground underneath and around the house is liberally strewn with rubbish of all descriptions. There is no formal system of sewage disposal. The occupants of the house defaecate and micturate through holes in the verandah and at the rear of the rooms in the time honoured fashion. Faeces are devoured by pigs and poultry.

Agriculture

The people of Rumah Bujak own extremely fertile swamp padi land. They grow sufficient rice for their own needs and

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

A. Rice Horticulture

The Ibans who moved into the Sibu District during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shifting cultivators. The main characteristics of shifting cultivation are,

> "rotation of fields rather than crops; clearing by means of fire; absence of draft animals and of manuring; use of human labour only; employment of the dibble stick. . . ; short periods of soil occupancy alternating with long fallow periods."

As already discussed in Chapter Two, the movements of the Ibans into the area were due to a number of factors, one being the growth of the population in the Second Division, another the Iban value of new land and the status accorded the pioneer, a cultural reinforcement of an adaptive mechanism.

The horticulture of the Ibans did not involve rotation of fields so much as the gradual extension of their farms down the Sarikei and Kanowit, and their tributaries, and on across the Rejang and up the northern branches of tributaries of the Rejang and Igan. As one Tuai Rumah related,

> "We moved from Julau to Nanga Salim, thence we farmed both sides of the river, moving to uncleared and unclaimed areas and finally came to Ulu Salim."

The settlements of the Ibans who moved into the District were by no means as permanent as they are today. Rather, temporary houses were constructed in proximity to land selected for farming, and abandoned when the Ibans moved to new sites. As two women recounted the story of

361 In addition to those factors mentioned above, the permanence of settlements is influenced by other circumstances as well, such as availability of a personally determined adequate water supply, proximity to farm lands, distance from roads and means of communication with other communities and urban areas, and the quality of materials and craftsmanship used in the construction of the longhouse.

Freeman's generalization that,

> "all Iban long-houses are situated on the banks of rivers, or streams, navigable by dug-out canoes,"

361 does not apply to a number of settlements in the Sibu District. In some
312 cases, Ibans have been crowded into areas which, by their own evaluation, are less desirable owing to poor water supplies. For example, at Bukit Penyau, where the Iban longhouses are surrounded by Chinese settlements, the only water supply available for a community of fifteen doors is a small ground-well containing greenish, stagnant water. As opportunities have presented themselves, the Ibans of that community have moved to other sites offering better water.

361 Increasingly, the proximity of farm lands to the longhouse is in-
241 fluencing the settlement patterns of the Ibans. Unlike the peers who practice shifting cultivation, maintaining a permanent longhouse but locating annually in farmhouses (langkau, rumah alau) at some distance from the longhouse, the Ibans of this District infrequently find it necessary to farm so far away from the longhouses that they must spend
000 nights away (bemalam) at the farm. The introduction of the Padi Planting

193 the accounts.[15] For example, two lemambang (bards), one from Baweng
166 Asaan, another from Song, independently supported the following accounts about famous pioneers to the Rejang:

> "Igoh apai Lamban came from the Ulu Layar to the Sarikei in search of new land. He had been a leading warrior... There was no quarrel in the Layar which forced him to migrate; he wanted to be a pioneer and to seek new lands (emphasis added).
>
> "At about the same time Mujah (Buah Raya) led the first migrations into the Ulu Julau, a branch of the Kanowit tributary of the Rejang. (Since other areas were already settled), Mujah kept on looking for new land, and thus came to Julau. Upon his arrival, he and his followers fought against the Rejangs, Tanjongs, Kanowits, Ukits and Lugats in many parts of the Rejang" (emphasis added)

4. Raiding and Headhunting

175 A fourth factor contributing either directly or indirectly to
166 the migrations was the high value of raiding and headhunting, practiced
721 by some but, it is important to note, not all, Ibans. Without imputing
[24] any causal relationship, those Ibans were shifting cultivators who practiced
[773] headhunting. The charter for headhunting was mythical in character, being contained in the instructions given by the spirit Puntang Raga to Serapoh: Ulit orang ke mati enda tau enda diketas enggau pala munsoh ("Mourning for the dead must be cut away with an enemy's head," Sandin 1962-12).

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[15] Particularly when they are quick to discredit one another whenever the opportunity arises.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

326

The introduction of the Padi Planting

361 Scheme by the Agriculture Department has permitted approximately sixty per
241 cent of the Ibans to farm near their longhouses. In several cases where
[654] the farms were deemed too far away, the families concerned moved closer to their farms and built a new longhouse as, for instance, in the case of Rumah Nyelang of Ulu Salim.

The longhouse communities of the District are related to the pasar
369 in a variety of ways, as already discussed. These relations are expressed in the increasing frequency of travel between longhouses and the pasar,
[178] and the demand of Ibans for ways and means of travel. Whereas prior to the mid-1960's travel was either by water or by bicycle-paths, the construction of the Oya-Durin Road system through the District has effected changes in the means of travel and in the orientation of rural residents. Bus service is available to the Oya and Durin Roads and for those who are willing and able to pay, taxis-licensed and private[2] -travel wherever and whenever they are paid. High-powered motor launches, sometimes misnamed "expresses," ply between Sibu and rural areas, navigating the Rejang, Igan and Leba'an Rivers.

Extension of the road system and the urban connections offered
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178 thereby has produced several interesting examples of value change and resettlement by Ibans. When surveyors began laying out the lines for the new road through Ulu Naman, the people of Rumah Buda forcibly blocked the

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[2] Read, "pirate."

361 342 [829] land.[4] We have noted already the significance the Ibans attached to the construction of the first house made of durable planks (rumah papan) at Bawang Assan.

Where longhouses are old or built of impermanent materials, they may be abandoned or dismantled. When this occurs, the occupants will move either to a new site if a more favorable one is available, or else build temporary houses (dapor, kitchen) immediately behind the old site on which the new house will be built. In three cases out of ten in which longhouses were abandoned or dismantled, the residents rebuilt on the same site. In the other seven cases, the residents moved to new sites but in no instance more than three miles distance from the former house site. In four of the ten cases, the Ibans did not construct a new longhouse but rather a cluster of individual houses, about which more will be said later.

361 241 It must be noted that while the longhouse system may be described as one of relatively permanent residence, the Ibans in some instances return only occasionally to the longhouse. For example, the occupants of Rumah Meruan live in langkau immediately adjacent their rubber gardens, returning to the longhouse only for ceremonial or judicial occasions.

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[178] [4] Dulu' suba' ambis lama' kuat diau lima tauka enam taun, pindah ngiga' menoa baru. Tang, diatu' enda' ulih, orang enggai agi' ("Formerly, the longest people lived in one place would be for five or six years, then move on to look for new country. But, you can't do that now, and the people no longer want to"), Anyau Bakit, interview,22 March, 1971.

361 Thus, they spend only one month in each year at the longhouse, and the
241 remainder of the time they reside in their langkau.

B. Rationale for the Longhouse System

361 Although the origins of the longhouse system are unknown, Ibans
125 questioned on the probable reason for the development of the longhouse
829 system attribute it to three principal functions, which are defensive, ceremonials, and juridical. Every Iban who was asked about the origin of the longhouse system related it to a strategy of defense when head-hunting was still common. Scattered settlements, they said, would have been easy prey for predators, hence the banding together of kin-groups in longhouse communities.

621 The ceremonial functions of the longhouse are related to mechanisms
796 activated to express and re-inforce the solidarity of the community, to renew ties with distant kinsmen, and to provide a means of upward social mobility. The times of planning and executing the various gawai involve the entire community: men, women and children. Lengthy discussions are held on the ruai of the tuai rumah and everyone engages in pleasant banter,
[574] anticipating the forthcoming event. When a major gawai is carried out, members of each family visit kinsmen to ask eggs for smoking, together with chickens and pigs from relatives who are invited to the gawai, and who will make similar requests from the sponsors in the future. Gift-giving, cooperative labors and the cordial relations which mark the festive occasions provide an opportunity for amicable associations to be recounted and relived in many evening's randau ruai.

Land Dyak OC8
Borneo OC1
Iban OC6
Bahau OC5

[339 cont.]

about to accept something. The constellation seen in the direction of his arm is in the position tarima, "to accept." If this should be the Pleiades, it is time to look for a place to lay out the rice fields. If the astronomer must raise his arm somewhat to point to the constellation, this is the position soesoer gelang (soesoer means "to slide down"; gelang is "bracelet"), thus the position when the bracelet slides from the wrist to the elbow; this is the time to fell the trees. If he must look even higher to find the Pleiades, so that his forehead is wrinkled (karoet), then it is time to burn the cleared area. If the Pleiades stand so high that his cap (tangkoeloe) falls off (laboeh) because he has to hold his head so far back, it is the position laboeh tangkoeloe, the time for sowing.

The Sea Dajak in Sarawak, it is said, also [340] regulate their agricultural activities according to the position of the Pleiades. On the other hand, it is said of other Dajak tribes that they have no particular way of reckoning time. They keep abreast of the changing seasons mainly to find the most propitious time to sow rice. In every village a certain person is charged with reckoning the seasons. A peculiarity among the Kenja-Dajak [Kenya Dyak] is that they do not consider the position of the Pleiades in this connection, but the height of the sun at a certain hour. For this purpose they use an instrument known by the name toekar do, or aso do. A straight, cylindrical stick of hardwood, at the top of which a human figure is usually carved, is placed in a vertical position in the ground and tightly secured. The ground around it is carefully cleared and made as smooth and flat as possible. The man who is reckoning the seasons now takes a flat, nicely carved stick which has notches on one side, corresponding to certain points of the left arm when the stick is placed against it. On the other side of the stick there are notches that mark the midday shadow of the vertical stick when the flat stick is placed in a horizontal position with one end touching the vertical stick ( ). The shadow is measured at intervals of three days. As soon as the Dajak astronomer sees from his measurements that the midday shadow is